



The CITY of SALINE

Office of the Mayor

100 North Harris Street • Saline, MI 48176-1642
Phone 734-429-4907 ext 213
www.ci.saline.mi.us

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July 31, 2007

Docket Number: FD 35065

From: Gretchen Driskell, Mayor
City of Saline
100 N. Harris St.
Saline, MI 48176

To: Secretary, Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D C. 20423
202-245-0462

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

AUG - 3 2007

Part of
Public Record

The City of Saline is filing a formal protest opposing the lease of prime and improved Michigan railroad track from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo owned by the Class I Norfolk-Southern Railroad to WATCO Companies, a Class III railroad operator. Approval would seriously jeopardize the Wolverine and Blue Water Amtrak routes as well as the projected Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter line.

The City of Saline recognizes the extensive investment of \$38 million by the State of Michigan, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration in improved track and signaling to enable high speed rail passenger trains to travel 90 mph currently and 110 mph by the end of 2007. Reflecting the increased attraction of passenger rail, the Amtrak Wolverine, which uses the track in question, sold 142,185 tickets (report for January 30, 2007,) a 6% increase over the previous year.

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The City of Saline is most concerned that given Class III railroads' record and financial capability for track maintenance, the new top speed for passenger and freight rail may decline from 79 mph to a top speed of only 45 mph. This decrease in speed may indeed block development of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and the Ohio Hub, while seriously lowering the efficiency of the Midwest's entire passenger rail system.

The City of Saline is much concerned that the WATCO Companies do not operate any of their sixteen short lines at a speed of 79 mph. Further, one of WTCO Companies Oklahoma short lines has violated its contract with the State of Oklahoma maintaining speeds of only 10 mph instead of the contracted 30 mph. The State of Oklahoma has filed a suit for breach of contract.

With the continued increase of Amtrak usage in the state of Michigan, now is not the time to diminish fast passenger train service. At a time when the American people are experiencing record gas prices and our population is growing older, it is more important than ever to for the Surface Transportation Board to assure time-competitive and safe passenger train service. At a time when Michigan is struggling to balance its budget, this is not the time to impede the promise of the economic development by the projected Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter line.

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As an organization committed to fighting global warming, the City of Saline is concerned that decreasing the efficiency of passenger train travel would increase carbon emissions as former Amtrak passengers elect to drive or fly. One train carrying 200 people between

Detroit and Chicago saves 22 tons of CO2 compared to 200 cars and 15 tons compared to two jets carrying that many passengers.

The City of Saline believes it would be far better for the Norfolk-Southern to enter into serious negotiations with the State of Michigan and Amtrak than to unilaterally decide, despite large public investment, to sell to a short line that does not have the economic viability to maintain prime railroad track at existing levels

Sincerely,

CITY OF SALINE


Gretchen Driskell
Mayor



I, Justine Mira, Administrative Assistant, City of Saline, hereby certify that on August 1, 2007, I served copies of "the City of Saline's filing a formal protest opposing the lease of prime and improved Michigan railroad track from Ypsilanti to Kalamazoo owned by the Class I Norfolk- Southern Railroad to WATCO Companies, a Class III railroad operator; on the following parties by way of Federal Express:

**Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Washington DC 20423**

**Charles D. Nottingham, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423**

**W. Douglas Buttrey, Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20423**

**Francis P. Mulvey
Board Member of the Board
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423**

**Party Of Record:
Moates, G Paul
Sidley Austin LLP
1501 K Street, N.W
Washington, DC 20005**

**Party Of Record:
Smith, Donald H
Sidley Austin LLP
1501 K Street, N W
Washington, DC 20005**

**Party Of Record:
Mullins, William A
Baker & Miller Pllc
2401 Pennsylvania Ave,
Nw-Suite 300
Washington, DC 20037**

**Party Of Record.
Morell, Karl
Ball Janik LLP
1455 F Street Nw
Suite 225
Washington, DC 20005**

**Member Of Congress:
Honorable Carl Levin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

**Member Of Congress.
Honorable Pam Byrnes
Michigan House Of Representative 52Nd District
P O Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909**

Dated: August 1, 2007

Signature: Justine Mira



Affidavit

"I, Gretchen Driskell, Mayor of City of Saline declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Further, I certify that I am qualified and authorized to file this pleading.

Executed on August 1, 2007

Signature: